

Kewaunee County Groundwater Task Force
August 5th, 2015
Regular Monthly Meeting Notes

1. Call to Order – Chairman Lee Luft at 1:00pm, Wednesday, August 5, 2015
2. Roll Call: by Davina Bonness (Secretary)

Present: Cindy Kinnard, Nick Cochart, Lee Luft, Dick Swanson, Ron Heuer, Davina Bonness, John Pagel ,
Absent: Tom Kleiman
Excused Absent: Aerica Bjurstrom

Also in attendance – Russ Rasmussen, Kyle Burton, & Beth Olson (WI Department Natural Resources)

3. Approval of Agenda without changes: Motion to approve agenda by John Pagel and seconded by Ron Heuer. Task Force was unanimous in favor of the motion, passed.

Approval of June 3, 2015 meeting minutes without changes: Motion to approve agenda by Nick Cochart and seconded by Davina Bonness. Task Force was unanimous in favor of the motion, passed.

4. Committee Updates

A). Cindy Kinnard gave an update that all beach signs/flags were installed and follow a Green, Yellow, and Red warning system.

B). Article for Kewaunee Star regarding where citizens can seek help with unsafe wells is temporarily on hold until questions regarding adding water treatment systems to unsafe wells can be fully resolved (see point “C” just below).

C). DNR officials will get Kewaunee County confirmation of what (if any) prohibitions are on the use of RO/UV systems to treat unsafe wells. Mr. Heuer and Mr. Luft will hold off drafting letter to DNR regarding such prohibitions.

D). Davina Bonness gave an update on Lincoln Township’s depth of Groundwater & Bedrock mapping, which started this week. Maps that will be created included Depth to Bedrock, Water Table, Recharge, Groundwater Contaminant Susceptibility, and Karst Landforms.

E). Selection of Goals – delay until September meeting

F). Davina Bonness gave an update on the County Conservationist meeting where she presented the Public Health & Groundwater Protection Ordinance. DATCP, NRCS, and DNR officials also presented on the budget, nutrient management, farmland preservation, adaptive management trading and county training needs.

G). Davina Bonness also gave an update on the Public Health & Groundwater Protection Ordinance Update. The office is starting to meet with landowner’s onsite for stacking locations; several landowners will be requesting stacking variances for 2016 until they can construct permanent storages.

5. Discuss recent ground and surface water related events / issues

- A. **Augustian CAFO hearing expansion.** On Tuesday July 28th a DNR hearing was held in Green Bay to allow citizen input on the expansion of an existing farm (Augustian Farm) to CAFO status. This farm wishes to expand from 776 animal units to 1,699 animal units. The DNR hearing room was filled to capacity and media covering this hearing included Wisconsin Public Radio, Green Bay Press Gazette and Kewaunee County Star News. 17 citizens spoke against the expansion while no individual or group spoke in favor of the expansion. The reasons for opposing the expansion included the fact that the DNR's own calculations show our county's lands can not absorb the nutrients (Nitrogen, Potassium, Phosphate) in the volume of manure now being applied and a further expansion could make current levels of well contamination and surface water pollution even worse. A physician treating a number of Kewaunee County residents with MRSA also added that he found it "incredible" that more animals would be allowed on farms using so many of the antibiotics that humans rely upon. Lee Luft added that Kewaunee County lands were now being spread with the amount of untreated waste that would be equal to the human waste from Detroit, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Milwaukee and Green Bay. Finally several speakers asked why the DNR does not act on behalf of the citizens who have been impacted by high levels of well contamination and polluted surface waters. A decision by the DNR on this expansion request is due on September 1st.

6. Russ Rasmussen, Kyle Burton, & Beth Olson from the Department of Natural Resources were in attendance and discussed how DNR wants to coordinate efforts to balance those of our Groundwater Task Force. From their initial three informational meetings (Agency, CAFO, & EPA Petitioners), DNR is now forming five subgroups. Meetings for these sub-groups will all be public noticed

1. Short Term Solutions – this group will focus on

1. How to get accurate information to the public
 2. Well compensation & treatment
 3. How to get clean water to those who can't drink their water
 4. What departments can and can't do – and then address those limitations
- First meeting will be on August 25th in Oshkosh– AM – time not set yet

2. Best Management Practices (BMPs) / Sensitive Areas – this group will define what BMP's work best in sensitive areas and focus on the Karst Task Report and the Public Health & Groundwater Ordinance.

First meeting will be on August 25th in Oshkosh – PM – time not set yet.

3. Compliance – this group will focus on compliance and enforcement issues

4. Communication – this group will focus on getting accurate information to the public and act as an information hub for all the other groups' recommendations.

5. Alternative Technology – this group will focus on treatment options, alternative technology for waste disposal and spreading

Russ also mentioned that DNR found funding, approximately \$40,000/year for 2 years, to earmark for Kewaunee County. DNR is seeking input from Kewaunee County regarding the projects and/or research this money could be used for given the criteria established by the State

7. Public Comments: There were 14 public comments:

1. Joe Mills – discussed getting NR151 (b) implemented in Kewaunee County for enforcement and regulations – would like GWTF to discuss this at next meeting. This item is also on the next Land and Water Conservation Committee under (Other Matters to Discuss – Chapter 23).
2. Bill Faller – discussed IL Farm Bureau and their nutrient reduction strategy and asked whether Wisconsin would adopt this strategy.
3. Sue Wiesser – asked questions on whether or not the well compensation was eliminated from DNR. DNR officials answered that the program was not cut and remains the same with the \$9000 cap with significant income requirements.
4. Pat Schoenbeck – discussed how 30% of “tested” wells is not statistically representative and is encouraged by Lincoln Township’s groundwater and karst mapping project. She asked questions including “How do you stop more expansions in the County and does anyone have the power to say no?”
5. Nancy Utesch – discussed that we need to stop messaging that CAFO’s are highly regulated and that she is disappointed that only \$40,000 is coming into Kewaunee County when \$300,000 was put on manure irrigation research. She said we don’t need subgroups, we need clean water.
6. Bill Iwen – discussed the 2014 nutrient balance summary that shows an excess of N-P-K in Kewaunee County, yet there are more expansions being considered as we speak. Mr. Iwen also mentioned the polluter should pay for necessary clean-up
7. Lynda Cochart – discussed the environmental groups do not represent the people who have bad wells and mentioned that DNR met with CAFO’s but did not meet with waste water treatment or private septic haulers or municipalities. Also brought up how the well compensation program has testing requirements that make qualifying for compensation very difficult e.g. two consecutive positive tests for e-coli when e-coli results can change daily.
8. Mick Sagrillo – discussed that he has probably the most tested well in Kewaunee County and how treatment systems are a band aid and are cost prohibited to some individuals. He stated that the DNR met with DBA, CAFO, EPA Petitioners, but has yet to meet with impacted communities? If you research the percent of unsafe wells, how effective is that? His answer is monitoring wells.
9. Andy Barta – discussed how their business writes approximately 140 nutrient management plans in the County (none are CAFO’s) and how most farmers want to do the right thing with splitting nitrogen applications and cover crops.
10. Joe Musial – discussed that the DNR needs to maintain the public trust and enforce their mission statement.

11. Dale Konkell – Door County Soil & Water discussed how different Kewaunee and Door County is relating to how they receive and review nutrient management plans.

12. Jodi Parins – Town of Lincoln – discussed that they need relief now and questions the composition of the DNR workgroups. She wants local control back and clean water.

13. Jesse Jerabek – Town of Lincoln – disappointed with DNR, wants answers to the questions of “Can we treat our water and what is available to treat our water” and wants immediate relief.

14. John Pabek – Legislature govern changes and discussed how they (DNR) should be charging water usage on high capacity wells and use that money to fund studies.

8. Other matters to discuss: Questions/Comments from Board Members:

Nick Cochart wanted to know what can be done NOW / TODAY for getting clean water to those whose wells are unsafe? Maybe looking at schools and municipal water systems to provide access to clean water at no cost to individuals with unsafe water.

Ron Heuer asked about whether putting a RO/UF system on an unsafe well is legal. DNR had a discussion about different treatment systems require approval from DNR / DSP, but would look at their statutes and get us the exact wording and information.

Davina Bonness discussed with the research how e-coli comes and goes quickly in karst topography and is extremely variable. Question for DNR was “What constitutes a bad well?”

Dick Swanson discussed that people are very frustrated with DNR and asked where the money to get clean water is?

9. Set Next Meeting Date

September 9, 2015 at 1:00pm at the Kewaunee County Administrative Department

10 Adjournment -- A motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:34 pm was made by John Pagel and seconded by Ron Heuer, Motion carried unanimously

Minutes submitted by Davina Bonness, County Conservationist